



Editorial

Introduction



This special issue on cochlear implants is dedicated posthumously to William F. House, M.D., the Father of Neurotology. Dr. House initiated the first national clinical trial on cochlear implants. I was privileged to be one of his fellows and to be included in this first Co-Investigator group and implanted our first patient in 1979. This led to our involvement as an FDA Consultant and later FDA ENT Devices Panel member. This clinical trial led to the first ever FDA approval for cochlear implants and opened the door for unprecedented advances in the treatment of deafness and hearing loss.

Dr. Ingeborg Hochmair was working in parallel with Dr. House from the very earliest days of cochlear implantation. I was invited to Vienna by her to observe some of her excellent results and spent an exciting week at the beginning of my career. Professor Hochmair is President and CEO of MED-EL Corporation. She has continued to improve cochlear implant and electrode design and has incorporated the latest coding strategies.

Dr. Blake Wilson is a master at developing new coding strategies as they apply to cochlear implants and determining how to assess them. He has been continuously supported by the National Institutes of Health. He has kept his invaluable research in the public sector so as to have it available to anyone.

Dr. Fred Linthicum was one of my fellowship mentors and one of the preeminent temporal bone histopathologists in the world. Some of the temporal bones from my earliest cochlear implant patients are among his collection. His studies have provided insight into what is stimulated by a cochlear implant (the ganglion cell bodies) and the changes that are the result of the insertion and presence of the implant.

Dr. David Pisoni has been my colleague in the DeVault Otologic Laboratories from the beginnings of our NIDCD

studies. Our contention was that if cochlear implants were work, it would be a combination of sophisticated electronics coupled with limitless brain potential ("the ear is connected to the brain"). He also helped launch our NIDCD Training grant which supported many of our residents and researchers including Dr. Ted Meyer, Dr. Aaron Moberly, Dr. Michael Harris, Bethany Colson, Shirley Henning, and Dr. William Kronenberger who have made significant contributions to this issue.

Dr. Karen Iler-Kirk directed the DeVault Otologic Laboratories for many years prior to becoming Chair of Speech and Hearing at the University of Illinois. She is directly responsible for many of our NIDCD studies.

Amy McConkey Robbins helped launch our pediatric cochlear implant program some 35 years ago and has added greatly to our understanding of how a cochlear implant habilitation program augments this exciting technology for children.

Fan Gang Zeng is a long-time research collaborator. He was previously with the House Ear Institute and is now with UC Irvine.

Much remains to be accomplished, but the validity of establishing a complex interdisciplinary team pooling their expertise, which has been our model from the very beginning, is clearly in evidence.

Edited by Xin Jin

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